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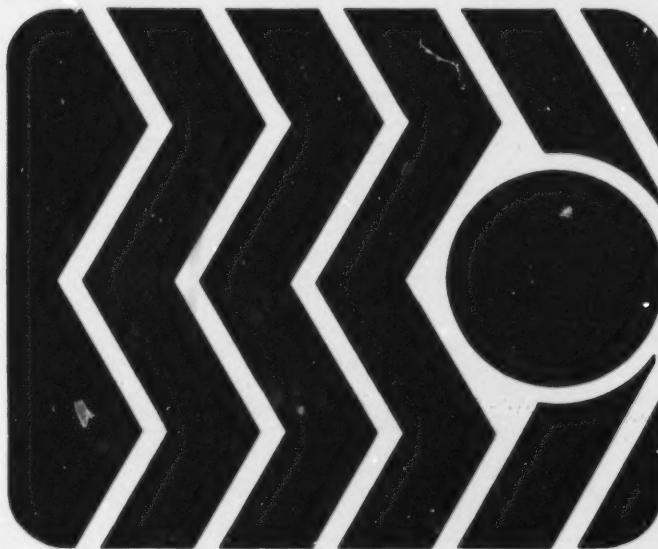
ABSTRACT

This occupational skills instructional module on coping with conflict is one of twelve making up a curriculum guide on the human aspects of working in organizations. The modules are designed for utilization at various educational levels ranging from high school to adult and continuing education, in either academic or vocational programs. This module is organized into six sessions: (1) what is conflict, (2) conflicts involving personal needs and goals, (3) unfair rules and avoiding responsibility, (4) conflicts resulting from prejudice, (5) conflict over job duties, and (6) preventing conflicts on the job. Each session is arranged according to the following components: topic; objective; skills emphasized (a listing of specific skills, e.g., working as a team member, working under pressure); notes on the importance of the session topic; list of materials and equipment needed (a copy of each student worksheet, transparency and/or handout is included); activity (description of how to conduct activity); and follow-up (discussion questions or activities to assist students in summarizing or evaluating the session topic). Teacher resources including the titles, sources, and descriptions of books, articles, and audiovisual aids conclude the module. A 16-item multiple choice test for use with this module is available in document CE 018 569. CE 018 556 describes the twelve modules and their development. (JH)

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ED162143

Methods And Materials For Teaching **Occupational Survival Skills**



Coping with Conflict

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Methods and Materials for Teaching Occupational Survival Skills

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1978

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Robert E. Nelson
Project Director

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The twelve Occupational Survival Skills Modules are not numbered. Instructors are encouraged to use Modules in any order that best fits their needs.

Coping with Conflict



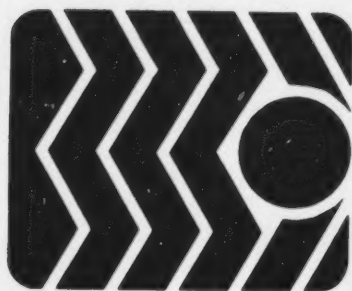
"Hey, Charlie's not just trying to make a good impression --- he's succeeding."

Module Objective:

Students will be able to recognize different causes of conflict on the job and possible ways of resolving conflicts in work situations.

Topic Outline:

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Coping with Conflict: Overview

Conflict is usually considered bad or unpleasant. Conflict in work situations may cause workers to become confused, frustrated and uncooperative. In extreme cases, conflict may result in violence. On the other hand, a conflict situation can also be a learning experience. By working out conflicts, workers can change and improve their work situations.

Many people handle conflicts as a matter of habit. They automatically do what they have learned to do in the past. Sometimes people try to ignore or avoid conflict, but unfortunately this often does more harm than good.

One good method of dealing with conflict is compromise, or "give and take." The people involved can figure out what is causing the conflict and decide together how they can settle it.

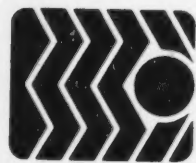
Sometimes workers are involved in conflicts because they have different needs or goals. People may cause trouble for others, either accidentally or on purpose, when they are trying to get what they want or need. One example of this is the worker who takes advantage of other people in order to look good to the boss.

Another kind of conflict occurs when workers try to avoid difficult or unpleasant tasks, unfairly making extra work for others. Sometimes workers face other unfair situations such as unfair rules or supervisors who play favorites.

Prejudices can cause a particularly difficult kind of conflict. Most people hold some prejudices, whether toward people of a different race, age group, background, or occupation. By examining their own prejudices and developing respect for others, workers can often prevent conflicts.

Workers may come into conflict because of the way they do their jobs. On one hand, workers who have no authority may be very bossy, causing other workers to become resentful. On the other hand, workers who either do not, or cannot do their jobs correctly, may make their co-workers angry by creating more work for them.

Workers who learn to prevent conflict and to deal with conflict when it occurs can help make their working environments more pleasant. The activities in this module explore some of the causes of conflict and suggest ways of handling conflicts when they occur.



SESSION ONE

TOPIC: What Is Conflict?

OBJECTIVE: By participating in a conflict fantasy and class discussion, students will become aware of their methods of dealing with conflict, and will be able to give examples of four methods of dealing with conflict.

SURVIVAL SKILLS
EMPHASIZED:

Getting along with others
Working as a team member
Basic speaking skills
Adjusting to work situations
Working under pressure

IMPORTANCE: When we think of conflict, we usually think of something bad or unpleasant. Yet if we learn to deal with conflict skillfully, we may discover that we can learn from conflicts and actually make our lives more pleasant. Most people deal with conflicts out of habit -- they automatically use the methods they have learned in the past. This session is designed to help students become aware of how they handle conflict, so they may decide whether they can improve their methods of handling conflict.

MATERIALS AND
EQUIPMENT: Student Worksheet #1 - Fantasy Trip
Transparency #1 - Handling Conflicts
Overhead projector

ACTIVITY: Conflict Fantasy Trip

1. Begin the session by asking the class to give some examples of conflict. Write student responses on the chalkboard.
 - wars between countries
 - arguments
 - labor disputes and strikes
 - fights
 - court battles
 - racial conflicts
 - civil wars
2. Ask students to explain the meaning of conflict. Try to draw from the discussion the ideas of interference and threat as used in this explanation:
 - Conflict occurs when a person's behavior interferes with or threatens another.

Return to the examples the students gave in step 1 and ask a student to explain how a person (or group) in the example interferes with or threatens another. (person or group)

3. Ask students to close their eyes and go on a "fantasy trip." Guide the fantasy by reading the situation below. Pause frequently to allow students to develop their fantasies:

You are walking down the street. You see a person walking toward you who looks familiar. As the person comes nearer, you realize that this is the person with whom you are most in conflict.... Become aware of how you feel inside.... Now you know that you must decide quickly what to do. As the person comes closer, several possibilities flash through your mind.... Decide right now what you will do.... Now, see yourself doing what you decided.... It is over now. The person is gone. Again become aware of how you feel inside.... Are you satisfied with your action?

- FOLLOW-UP:
1. Pass out Student Worksheet #1 - Fantasy Trip and read through the directions with the students. You may wish to emphasize that students will not be asked to share the details of their fantasy conflicts, as this is a personal matter. Students may use a word or phrase to answer the questions, since the worksheets are for their own reference.
 2. Discuss the fantasy experiences, using the following questions:
 - How do you feel when you know you are approaching a conflict situation? (Angry, afraid, tense, nervous, etc.)
 - What ideas did you have for dealing with the person? (Avoid the person, ignore the person, give the person a dirty look, act as if nothing is wrong, talk about the conflict, punch the person, etc.)
 - What did you decide to do in your fantasy? Is this how you usually deal with conflict?
 - Were you satisfied that you did the best or right thing in your fantasy? How do you feel about your action?
 3. Summarize the discussion by describing the different ways people handle conflict, using Transparency #1 - Handling Conflicts. Have students give examples for each method of handling conflict from their own experiences.
 - Avoiding - by staying away from the person; changing the subject when the conflict comes up in conversation; quitting a job.
 - Delaying - settling small parts of the conflict while leaving the important issues unsettled; postponing the discussion; cooling off the situation temporarily.
 - Confronting - Compromise - talking it over (not arguing); listening to both sides; stating and clarifying the problem; considering many solutions; deciding on a solution all persons can accept; putting the solution into action; evaluating the results. (This may sound familiar, since it is the process used in the Problem Solving module.)

When this method is used, everybody wins -- and everybody has to "give and take."

4. Ask students to decide which method they think would have worked best in their conflict fantasies. Have them give reasons for choosing one method instead of another.
 - How can the methods be combined?

Student Worksheet #1 Fantasy Trip

This worksheet is designed to help you look at your fantasy and at the way you handle conflict. You will not be asked to share the conflict with the class. However, you will be asked to share some of your thoughts about how you decided to handle the conflict in your fantasy.

Answer the questions below, using just a few words to remind you of your thoughts and feelings in the fantasy.

In your fantasy:

How did you feel before you decided what to do?

What ideas flashed through your mind before you decided what to do?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

What did you decide to do?

How did you feel afterwards?

Do you like the way you acted? Why or why not?

Transparency #1 Handling Conflicts



Avoiding



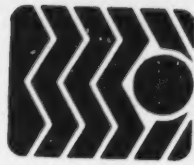
Delaying



Confronting: Power



Confronting: Compromise



SESSION TWO

TOPIC: Conflicts Involving Personal Needs and Goals

OBJECTIVE: By participating in class discussion of conflicts in two case studies, students will become aware of two kinds of worker conflicts that can occur on the job.

SURVIVAL SKILLS
EMPHASIZED:

Getting along with others
Working as a team member
Basic speaking skills
Working under tension or pressure
Giving an honest day's work

IMPORTANCE: People sometimes are involved in conflicts because they cause trouble for others when they are trying to get what they want or need. Of course, they may not even realize that they are causing a conflict. In work situations, workers may want promotions to better paying or more interesting jobs. They may want to impress the boss, hoping to receive a pay raise. They may want to gain special favors which may be unfair to other workers, from a co-worker or supervisor. They may need attention from their co-workers or praise from their supervisors. The case studies in this session demonstrate two ways in which workers can create or be affected by conflict. By exploring conflict situations and ways of dealing with them, students can develop their skills in handling conflicts.

MATERIALS AND Student Worksheet #2 - The Practical Joker
EQUIPMENT: Student Worksheet #3 - Wasted Talents

ACTIVITY: The Practical Joker - A Case Study

1. Divide the class into small groups of 4-5 students.
2. Hand out Student Worksheet #2 - The Practical Joker. Read through the incident with students.
3. Ask students to discuss in their groups ways of working out the conflict and answer the questions on the worksheet.

- FOLLOW-UP:
1. Discuss with students their ideas for dealing with this conflict. Use the questions below and the questions on the worksheet for the discussion. You may want to write on the board the resolving action that each group identified.
 - What is causing the conflict in this case?
(Don plays practical jokes. Some of his co-workers enjoy this but others get irritated and disgusted by it.)
 - Who is involved?
(All the shop workers at this time, particularly Don and Luis.)
 - What could have led to this situation?
(A dull work situation; other conflicts between workers in the shop, etc.)
 - Are Don's actions simply "practical jokes?"
(Perhaps they are to him, but they are actually wasting time and energy. In this case Don's joke created a safety hazard.)
 - What are Don's needs?
(He seems to need special attention from his co-workers.)
 - How do you think Don feels about Luis' accident?
(Don may feel sorry about the accident. Perhaps he will realize the dangers of his behavior.)
 - What might be a more satisfactory way for Don to meet his needs? (Perhaps he could use verbal jokes rather than practical jokes. He could gain attention for special work skills, etc.)

- What would you do if you were Luis?
(Luis could let Don know the joke was not funny. He could tell Don he will be reported to the supervisor. Luis could point out safety factors. Perhaps he could insist that Don pay for the repair or replacement of his watch.)
 - How do the other employees react to this situation?
(Some refuse to work with Don. Others continue to encourage him.)
 - How can this conflict be worked out?
(Co-workers can put pressure on Don and/or the supervisor to stop Don's behavior. Don could be given attention for something other than practical jokes.)
 - What could the supervisor do to settle this conflict?
(The supervisor could point out safety hazards and the waste of time and effort involved. The supervisor might also give Don attention for some work-related skill.)
 - What could the other employees do to help resolve the conflict?
(They could stop giving Don attention for jokes or refuse to work with him if the behavior continues. They could insist that the supervisor do something about Don's behavior.)
2. Ask students if any one of the actions listed would best resolve the conflict. Have them give reasons for their responses.

ACTIVITY: Wasted Talents--A Case Study

1. Have students work individually.
2. Distribute Student Worksheet #3 - Wasted Talents.
Read through the incident with students.
3. Ask students to write their responses to the questions on the worksheet.

FOLLOW-UP: Discuss the conflict situation with the students. Ask for their ideas on resolving the conflict. Use the questions on the worksheet to aid discussion. Some possible responses to the questions are:

- Linda is not doing the work in which she is interested, and Mrs. Woodley doesn't seem to be willing to allow Linda to do the work she wants to do.
- Linda and Mrs. Woodley seem to have different ideas of what Linda's job is. Perhaps this was not made clear before Linda started working.
- Linda seems to need or want a job in which she can use a skill or creativity. Her routine duties seem to have no meaning for her.
- Mrs. Woodley may think Linda is too inexperienced to do a good job. Or she may be afraid Linda will compete with her. She may simply feel she is too busy to work with Linda.
- Mrs. Woodley could assign Linda certain flower-arranging duties to give Linda an opportunity to demonstrate her skill.
- If Linda has had a poor attitude lately, Mrs. Woodley may be happy to have Linda to quit, or she may realize how much Linda wants to try her hand at flower-arranging and give in to Linda's demand.
- Linda has several options besides quitting. Perhaps she can do some flower-arranging on her own time to show Mrs. Woodley about some of the ideas for arrangements she would like to try. She will probably only do herself harm, though, by doing sloppy work and being rude to customers.

Student Worksheet #2 The Practical Joker

Don Meyer has quite a reputation around the shop as a practical joker. He has pulled all the old gags, such as filling a glove with grease or sending a new assistant after a left-handed monkey wrench. About half of the workers think Don's tricks are funny and that he livens things up on dull days. Don likes being known and recognized as the shop's "practical joker" and especially likes the attention from the other workers. Several of the workers are becoming disgusted with Don's jokes. They feel that he wastes time and that he creates more work for them. They consider his behavior childish, and they avoid working with him. Luis Rodriguez has tried to ignore Don's jokes because Luis sometimes has trouble controlling his temper.

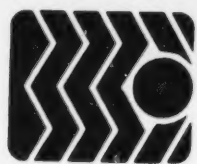
Today, Don greased the seat of the bench stool at Luis' work place. When Luis sat down, he slipped off the seat, hurt his left elbow, and smashed his wrist watch. Luis became very angry, but he used all his self-control to keep from hitting Don. Luis swore loudly at Don and warned Don never to come near him again.

1. What is the conflict in this case?
2. Who is involved in the conflict?
3. What are Don's needs?
4. How do you think Don feels about Luis' accident?
5. How can Don's needs be satisfied in a more constructive manner?
6. What would you do if you were Luis Rodriguez?
7. How can this conflict be resolved?

Student Worksheet #3 Wasted Talents

Linda Kirkman started working for a local flower shop as an assistant. She understood that she would be assisting the owner, Mrs. Woodley, with actual floral arrangements. Mrs. Woodley also asked Linda to be responsible for the window display. Linda has been working for six months and has not assisted Mrs. Woodley with any flower arrangements. She is still performing routine tasks, such as assembling items for the display window and cleaning the shop. Linda thinks her talents are being wasted. She has asked Mrs. Woodley about helping with the flower arrangements, but each time Mrs. Woodley replies, "We'll see about it later." She intends to let Linda help, but business has been especially heavy lately, and Mrs. Woodley feels she can do the arrangements more quickly herself. Linda feels quite discouraged and disappointed in her job. She dreads going to work and has difficulty being polite to customers. The more Linda thinks about her job, the angrier she gets. Linda has decided that today she will tell Mrs. Woodley that if she is not allowed to help with flower arrangements, she will quit her job, even though there is no other flower shop in town where she could work.

1. What is the major conflict here?
2. Who or what is responsible for this situation?
3. What are Linda's needs?
4. What are Mrs. Woodley's needs?
5. What could Mrs. Woodley do to settle this conflict?
6. If you were Mrs. Woodley, how would you react to Linda's threat to quit?
7. How else could Linda work out this conflict?



SESSION THREE

TOPIC: Unfair Rules and Avoiding Responsibility

OBJECTIVE: By participating in the group activities and class discussion, students will become aware of two kinds of conflicts which can occur on the job.

SURVIVAL SKILLS
EMPHASIZED:

Getting along with others
Working as a team member
Knowing what is expected
Following instructions
Working under pressure
Adjusting to work situations

IMPORTANCE: Conflicts between workers sometimes arise when they try to avoid difficult or unpleasant tasks. Other times people or rules may be unfair, or communication may be poor. The activities in this session demonstrate these kinds of conflict to students, so they can think of ways to prevent or deal with conflict constructively.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT: One copy of Student Worksheet #4 - Rules of the Game for each group of five students.

ACTIVITY: Conflict Situations*

1. Divide the class into groups of about five students each. The groups need not necessarily be the same size.

* Adapted from "Random Rules and Capricious Consequences," F. M. Aversano and R. R. Bodine, Activities and Exercises for Affective Education, Kent D. Beeler and Lou Thayer, Co-editor, AERA - SIB Affective Aspects of Education, 1975.

2. Tell the groups that they must decide on one person to be the group leader. Tell them that the group leader will have a difficult and unpleasant task to do. Group members may not vote. Members should try to convince the others not to select them, while trying to convince the group to select another member. This should generate considerable conflict.
3. After about five minutes or after giving the conflict a chance to develop, tell the groups to decide in the next three minutes on the person they think will make the best group leader. During this time, students may vote if necessary in order to select a leader.
4. Take the leaders aside and distribute Student Worksheet #4 - Rules of the Game to them. Explain the roles on the worksheet and make sure the leaders understand them before beginning the activity.
5. Explain to the entire class that each group will play three rounds of a game. There are two objects to each round:
 - To gain as many points as possible by giving correct answers to the group leader.
 - To guess the rule in each round that makes an answer correct. The rule will be different for each round.
6. Give the leaders a signal to begin. Notify the leaders after five minutes to start the second round. Notify them again after another five minutes to start the third round.
7. After all rounds of the game have been played, have the leaders reveal the rules for each round.

- FOLLOW-UP:
1. Reassemble the class for a discussion of the activity.
 2. Explain that two types of conflicts were demonstrated in the activity. The first conflict situation involved students trying to avoid an unpleasant or difficult task.
 - Why did conflict develop when the group was given the task of choosing a leader?

- How did group members deal with the conflict?
 - How did group members feel while trying to avoid being selected group leader?
 - How did the person selected to be the group leader feel?
 - Conflict sometimes develops on the job when one or more persons try to avoid responsibility? How could a situation like this be worked out?
3. Explain to students that the second conflict in this activity resulted from unknown and unfair rules.
- How did it feel to discover or not discover the rule in the first round?
 - How did the group members feel about the second and third rounds?
 - How did the group leader feel during the second and third rounds?
 - How did you feel about the game after you found out the rules?
 - How did you feel about all your answers being wrong in the last two rounds?
 - How did you feel about the winner in the last two rounds?
 - How did you feel about the leader in the last two rounds?
 - Conflict sometimes occurs in work situations when rules are unknown or are applied unfairly. How can workers deal with this type of situation?

Student Worksheet #4 Rules of the Game

Directions for the Game. (Read the directions to your group before beginning the game.)

I will ask you a question and you should answer as quickly as possible. You will receive two points for each correct answer. If you can guess the rule that makes an answer correct, you will receive a bonus of twenty points at the end of the game. The person with the most points at the end of five minutes wins the game. Keep score.

- * ONLY REVEAL THE RULE IF A GROUP MEMBER GUESSES IT. OTHERWISE,*
 - * TELL THE GROUP THEY MUST WAIT UNTIL THE THREE ROUNDS ARE OVER.*
-

ROUND ONE: Begin when your instructor gives you the signal.

QUESTION: I'll ask you to name different occupations. Try to discover the rule that makes your answer correct or incorrect.

ANSWERS: Rule - The occupations must be health occupations.
Correct answers will include: doctor, nurse, dentist, orderly, nurse's aide, pharmacist, ambulance driver, surgeon, dentist, dental hygienist, dietitian, medical laboratory workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, optometrists, social workers, X-ray technicians, hospital attendants, etc.

ROUND TWO: Begin when your instructor gives you the signal.

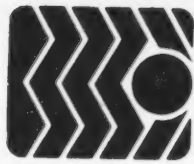
QUESTION: Name different situations that can cause conflict on a job. Try to discover the rule which makes your answer correct.

ANSWERS: Rule - Only persons wearing the color red can give correct answers. The answers of all other group members are incorrect.

ROUND THREE: Begin when your instructor gives you the signal.

QUESTION: Name different things a worker must do in order to keep a job.

ANSWERS: Rule - Only the answers of the person on your left are correct. The answers of all other group members are incorrect.



SESSION FOUR

TOPIC: Conflict Resulting From Prejudice

OBJECTIVE: By discussing prejudices and conflicts, students will become aware of worker conflict caused by prejudice and suggest ways of coping with these conflicts.

SURVIVAL SKILLS
EMPHASIZED:

Getting along with others
Honesty
Working under pressure
Adjusting to work situations

IMPORTANCE: Nobody likes others to think they are stupid, lazy, dishonest, incompetent, or inferior just because they are different. Yet some people treat others unfairly or unkindly simply because of a different race, sex, age, religion, or background. This kind of conflict is especially difficult to handle because it may involve beliefs or values that a person holds strongly. Getting others to change their prejudiced beliefs may be difficult or even impossible. One way of preventing conflicts due to prejudice is to become aware of and examine our own prejudices. We can then avoid causing conflicts. We can also try to increase our respect for others.

MATERIALS AND
EQUIPMENT: Student Worksheet #5 - Your "Prejudice Quotient"
Student Worksheet #6 - Old vs. Young

ACTIVITY: Your "Prejudice Quotient"

1. Begin the session by distributing Student Worksheet #5 - Your "Prejudice Quotient". Tell students to complete the worksheet quickly, writing down the first words that come to their minds.

NOTE: Several blanks are left on the worksheet. The instructor may wish to fill in the blank spaces with names of additional groups toward whom people might be prejudiced.

2. After students have finished, have students exchange papers. Then ask them to circle any of the responses they consider negative. If they would feel bad, angry or insulted, the word can be considered negative. One way of deciding this is for students to imagine that the words were used to describe themselves.
3. Have the students count the total number of words circled and write the total in the box at the bottom of the worksheet.
4. Compile a "class profile" by recording all the individual totals on the chalkboard. Have students return the worksheet to their owners and ask them to compare their scores with the overall class scores.

FOLLOW-UP: 1. Use the following questions to begin a discussion of prejudices, including how they can cause conflicts.

- What is prejudice?
(People often think of prejudice as only applying to certain races and ethnic groups. One of the purposes of the worksheet was to show students that prejudice means judging any group unfairly, including age groups, occupational groups, etc.)
- How does your "prejudice quotient" compare with other class members?
- Which groups on the worksheet brought to mind the most negative words? Why?
- How can prejudice cause conflicts on a job? Give examples from your experiences.

ACTIVITY: Old vs. Young

1. Divide the class into pairs of students.
2. Distribute Student Worksheet #6 - Old vs. Young
3. Tell students to read through the incident, discuss with each other how to resolve the conflict, and answer the questions given on the worksheet.

- FOLLOW-UP:
1. Use the questions on the worksheet to discuss the conflict situation with students. Below are some possible responses.
 - Gladys and Hilda seem to be extremely critical of a new worker, Amanda. There doesn't seem to be a good reason for this.
 - Amanda probably feels frustrated, angry, or hurt about the situation.
 - It is hard to know what Gladys and Hilda are feeling. They may be acting the way they are for a number of reasons. Perhaps they are afraid Amanda will take away one of their jobs. They might see the hiring of a new worker as an insult to them, implying that they are not doing a good job. Students will probably have several other ideas.
 - There are many possible ways of working out the conflict. Amanda could report the situation to her employer, but this might make things worse. Amanda could wait for a time when Hilda and Gladys are in a good mood and tell them how she feels. She could treat them with extra respect for their experience by admiring their skills and asking their advice about things. Amanda could simply ask Hilda and Gladys what she has done to upset them.
 - Amanda should probably start by looking at her own behavior. Is she doing anything that might anger Gladys or Hilda? Then she should try to understand how Gladys and Hilda feel. After she has looked at these two things, she should decide what action is most likely to get the best results.

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- Suppose instead of being younger than Hilda and Gladys, Amanda was of a different race. How would this change the situation?
2. Ask students to relate similar experiences to the class.

Student Worksheet #5 Your "Prejudice Quotient"

Finish the following sentence with the first three words that come to your mind. Be honest with yourself. An example is given.

Example: Cats are.....	quiet	clean	sneaky
Children are.....			
Bus drivers are.....			
Men are.....			
Customers are.....			
Tourists are.....			
Secretaries are.....			
Handicapped people are..			
Bosses are.....			
Hairdressers are.....			
Factory workers are.....			
Cab drivers are.....			
Working mothers are.....			
People on welfare are...			
Sales persons are.....			
Old people are.....			
Women are.....			
Politicians are.....			
Alcoholics are.....			
.....			
.....			
.....			

Total

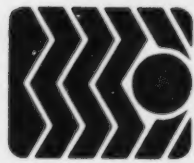
Student Worksheet #6 Old vs. Young

Star Catering Service employs three cooks, two middle-aged women and a newly hired high school girl. The two middle-aged women, Gladys and Hilda, are longtime employees. Gladys has been the head cook for ten years and Hilda has been her assistant for eight years. The new high school girl, Amanda, has just been hired as an additional worker. Both older women quarrel with Amanda for no apparent reason except that she is a young newcomer. Hilda and Gladys are constantly jumping on Amanda and are making her job an unpleasant one. Amanda needs this job for some additional training in cooking that she wants to take.

Amanda came to work today determined to get along with Hilda and Gladys. She worked very hard and began to sing softly as she worked. Gladys remarked to Hilda, "Maybe if she would put her energy into working instead of singing, she might get something done today."

This was the last straw for Amanda. She turned to Gladys and said, "Listen, I'm working harder than either one of you ever do. Why don't you just mind your own business and get off my back!"

1. What is the conflict here and who is involved?
2. How do you think Amanda feels?
3. Why do you think Gladys and Hilda feel the way they do?
4. What are three possible ways of dealing with this conflict?
5. If you were Amanda, what else could you have done to work out this conflict?



SESSION FIVE

TOPIC: Conflicts Over Job Duties

OBJECTIVE: By discussing two case studies, students will become aware of two types of worker conflicts and be able to identify ways of coping with these conflicts.

SURVIVAL SKILLS
EMPHASIZED:

Getting along with others
Working as a team member
Organizing work activities of others
Giving an honest day's work
Knowing what is expected
Working under pressure

IMPORTANCE: Sometimes workers have to deal with co-workers who try to "be the boss," but who actually have no authority. This can create a confusing and frustrating situation. This situation becomes even more difficult when the bossy co-worker has a special relationship with the boss or with some important person in the company.

Another kind of conflict can occur when a worker does a job carelessly or incorrectly, making more work for others. Both situations cause unpleasant conditions for workers. This session is designed to make students aware of these kinds of conflicts, so they can consider possible ways of handling them.

NOTE: A similar situation to Who's Boss? appears in the Problem Solving Module. Student Worksheet #13 - Agnes and Betsy can be used in addition to or in place of Worksheet #7 - Who's Boss?

MATERIALS AND Student Worksheet #7 - Who's Boss?
EQUIPMENT: Student Worksheet #8 - The Incompetent Employee

ACTIVITY: Who's Boss? - A Case Study

1. Divide the class into small groups of 4-5 students.
2. Distribute Student Worksheet #7 - Who's Boss? to the students.
3. Instruct the groups to read through the case study and then discuss the conflict, using the questions on the worksheet as a guide.

- FOLLOW-UP:
1. Discuss students' ideas for handling this situation. The questions on the worksheet may be helpful in your discussion. Possible responses are given below.
 - Susan is irritated by Al's nosiness and bossiness. Al's behavior is also causing Susan to have to do part of Al's work as well as her own.
 - This situation involves Al and all the workers who come into contact with him. It also involved Jack and Jerry Nogle.
 - Al's behavior is nosy, bossy, and in a way irresponsible since he is getting behind in his own work when it is not necessary.
 - Perhaps Al feels he is better than the other workers since he has worked for the company for 12 years and he is a personal friend of one of the owners. Another possibility is that he feels left out of the group and being nosy and bossy is his way of trying to be part of the group. Students may have other ideas about Al's behavior.
 - Susan probably is frustrated and angry since Al is making the work situation unpleasant and is causing Susan to have to do extra work. She also may feel a bit sorry for Al since none of the other workers seem to like him.

- One possible solution might be for Susan and her co-workers to try to be more friendly to Al. Perhaps if Al felt he was a part of the group, he would not need to boss others. Students will have many ideas. The important thing in working out this conflict is to try to do what is best for all involved, including Al.
 - This seems to be a group problem, so a group solution seems to be the best route. If other group members will not cooperate, though, Susan may have to work out the conflict herself.
2. Write on the chalkboard each group's final action for resolving the conflict.
 3. Ask students to suppose for a moment that Susan was a man. Would this change their approach at all? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY: The Incompetent Employee

1. Ask students to form groups of threes.
2. Distribute Student Worksheet #8 - The Incompetent Employee.
3. Tell the groups to read through the case. Then, ask each student to assume the role of one of the three workers in the incident. Tell students to play the role of that worker in discussing and resolving the conflict.

- FOLLOW-UP:
1. Use the questions on the worksheet for discussion of the conflict. Possible responses are given below.
 - This conflict seems to result from Joyce's inability to do her job correctly, making extra work for Brian and Laura.
 - Brian and Laura probably feel frustrated, angry and resentful, especially since Joyce has gained a reputation for being the best clerk in the store in spite of her inability to do her job correctly.

- Brian and Laura cannot work out the conflict by themselves. They will either need to involve Joyce, her supervisor, or both.
- Joyce may not be aware of the problem if Brian and Laura are straightening out her mistakes without letting her know about it.
- Brian and Laura could offer to show her how to correct her mistakes, but refuse to correct them for her.

Student Worksheet #7 Who's Boss?

Susan Phillips had been employed for two weeks as a carpenter for Nogle Brothers. Susan is a highly qualified carpenter, yet she felt lucky to get the job with Nogle Brothers since many of the companies she applied to were hesitant to hire a woman as a carpenter. Susan gets along fine with the boss, Jack Nogle, and most of the other employees. The exception is "old bossy" Al Perry. Al is nosy and constantly checks to see what Susan and the others are doing. Al is also extremely bossy. He tells Susan and the other workers how to do every little bit of work and doesn't get his own work done. Then he tells Susan to help out with his work.

Susan doesn't like being bossed around by Al. Trying to work with him is just impossible. The problem is that Al has worked for Nogle Brothers for twelve years and is a good friend of the co-owner, Jerry Nogle. Susan likes her job and needs the money. Today is Friday, and Susan has special plans for the evening. She usually doesn't mind working a few minutes late, but she really needs to get home on time tonight. Al has let his work fall far behind and tells Susan to help him out. Susan realizes that she will be forty-five minutes late if she helps him to finish. She would really like to tell Al off and leave him stuck with all his work, but she is afraid she would be risking her job.

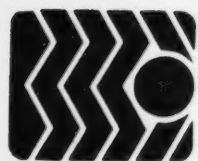
1. What is causing the conflict?
2. Who is involved?
3. How would you describe Al's behavior?
4. Why do you think Al acts the way he does?
5. If you were Susan, how would you be feeling?
6. What are some ways you could work out the conflict?
7. If you were Susan, would you try to handle the conflict yourself? Or would you try to get assistance from your co-workers?

Student Worksheet #8 The Incompetent Employee

Joyce Hall works as a salesclerk at Jack's Hardware Store, a small retail store. Brian Haines and Laura Scott are also employed there as salesclerks. Joyce has worked for two years now and is still making the same mistakes. She forgets to order stock, or if she does remember to order, she does it incorrectly. She cannot balance her cash and her cash register. Sometimes, after making a sale, she forgets to give customers their complete order, or she gives them someone else's order. Yet, she is considered the best clerk in the store. She outsells everyone else, and customers request her services because she is sincere and friendly.

Brian and Laura are becoming irritated with Joyce because of the many mistakes she makes. They always end up trying to straighten out her mistakes.

1. What is the conflict here?
2. How do you think Brian and Laura feel?
3. Should Brian and Laura try to work out the conflict?
4. Do you think Joyce is aware of the problem?
5. How could she be made aware of her problem?
6. How could this conflict be worked out?



SESSION SIX

TOPIC: Preventing Conflicts On the Job

OBJECTIVE: After examining the four stages of conflict, students will develop methods of handling conflicts at each stage.

SURVIVAL SKILLS
EMPHASIZED:

Getting along with others
Working as a team member
Knowing what is expected
Working under pressure
Following instruction

IMPORTANCE: Often conflicts can be prevented or settled before they grow. Rarely does avoiding or ignoring a conflict cause it to disappear. One way to prevent conflicts is to recognize them early and settle them quickly. By understanding the stages of conflict, students can become aware of conflicts, so they can take steps to settle them before they grow into big problems.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT: Transparency #2 - Taking Sides
Transparency #3 - Keeping Score
Transparency #4 - The Showdown
Transparency #5 - Adjustments
Student Worksheet #9 - Preventing Conflict
Overhead Projector

ACTIVITY: Preventing Conflicts on the Job

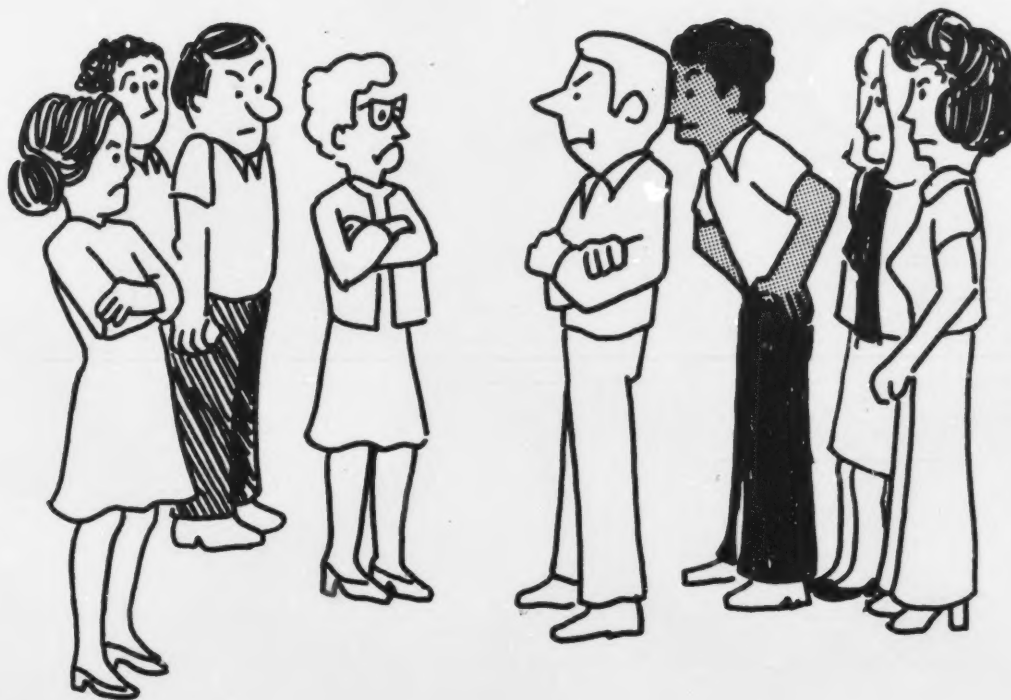
1. Using Transparencies #2 - 5, explain that though there are many different causes and kinds of conflict, most conflicts go through four stages.
 - Taking sides - When a tense situation develops, each person involved decides on a position. That is, people make up their own minds who is right and who is wrong. This stage can involve two people or many people. Have students think of a conflict in their own lives and imagine how people took sides. Did those involved in the conflict try to get others to take their side? How?
 - Keeping score - After a conflict situation begins, those involved often keep track of what the other person "does to them." During this stage, each side tries to prove how unreasonable the other is. They may even "keep score" on behavior that is not related to the original conflict. Have students think of a conflict situation in which people "kept score." How do people feel when keeping score?
 - The showdown - Sooner or later people involved in a conflict will decide they "have had it" or they "just can't take it any more" and decide to confront the other person. This can be done in a constructive way by talking the situation over and coming to compromises, or it can be done destructively by quitting, threatening others or firing. A strike is an example of a showdown. How do people feel during a showdown?
 - Adjustments - After the showdown, one or both sides may decide to make some changes in their behavior. Sometimes this means a "get tough" policy; sometimes it means trying to be more understanding. The adjustments that people make determine how well the conflict is settled. For example, if one side is expected to do all the "adjusting", it may become angry, causing the conflict to start over again.
2. Divide students into pairs or small groups of three or four.
3. Assign to each group one of the case studies already discussed.

4. Have students identify each stage of conflict in the case study. Ask them to write down ways that the conflict could have been prevented during each stage.

VARIATION: Instead of using case studies, have students bring in newspaper articles about conflicts.

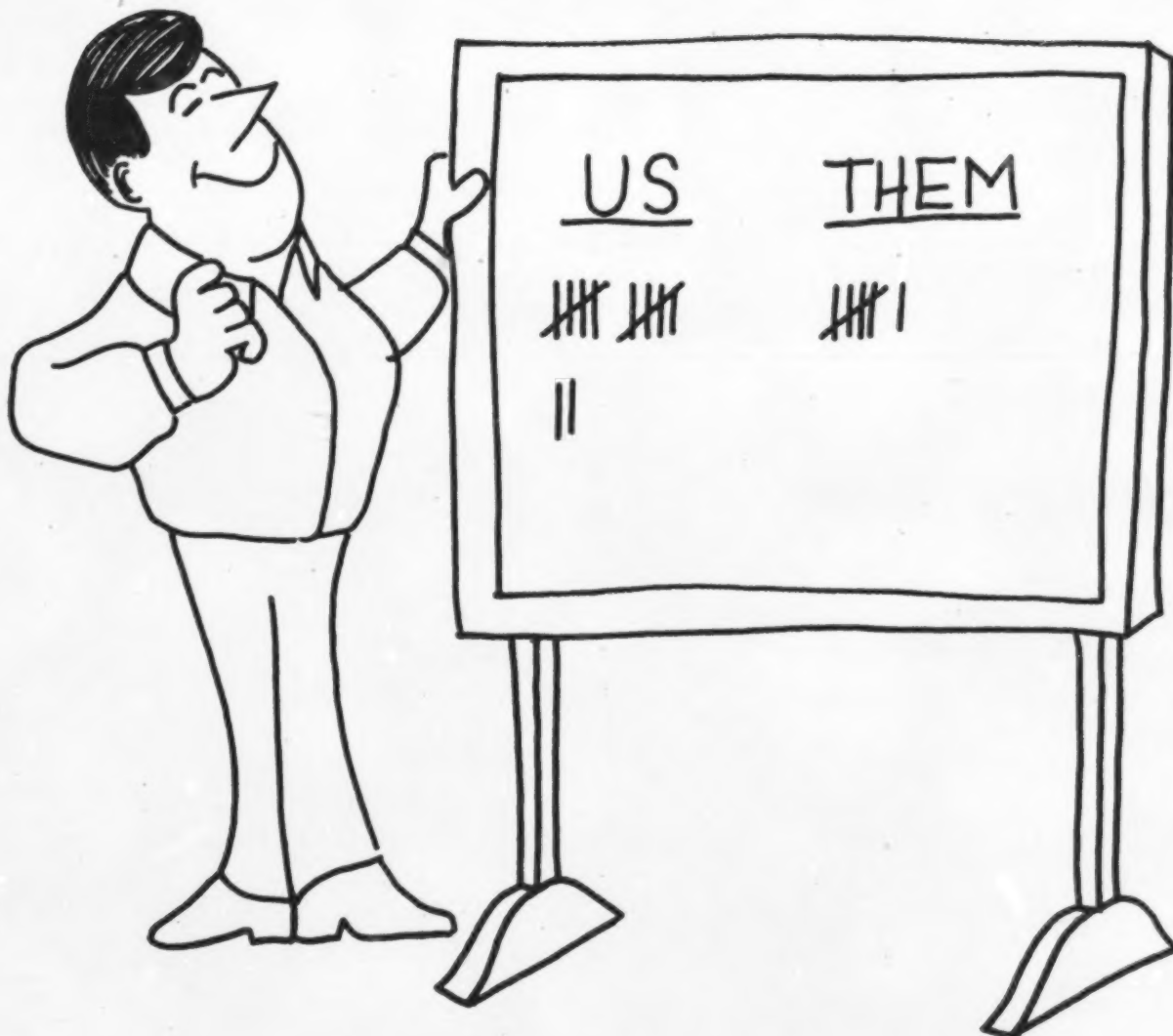
- FOLLOW-UP:
1. Ask each group to give a short report, telling the class how it decided the conflict could have been prevented.
 2. Ask other students to share their thoughts and ideas.

Transparency #2 Taking Sides

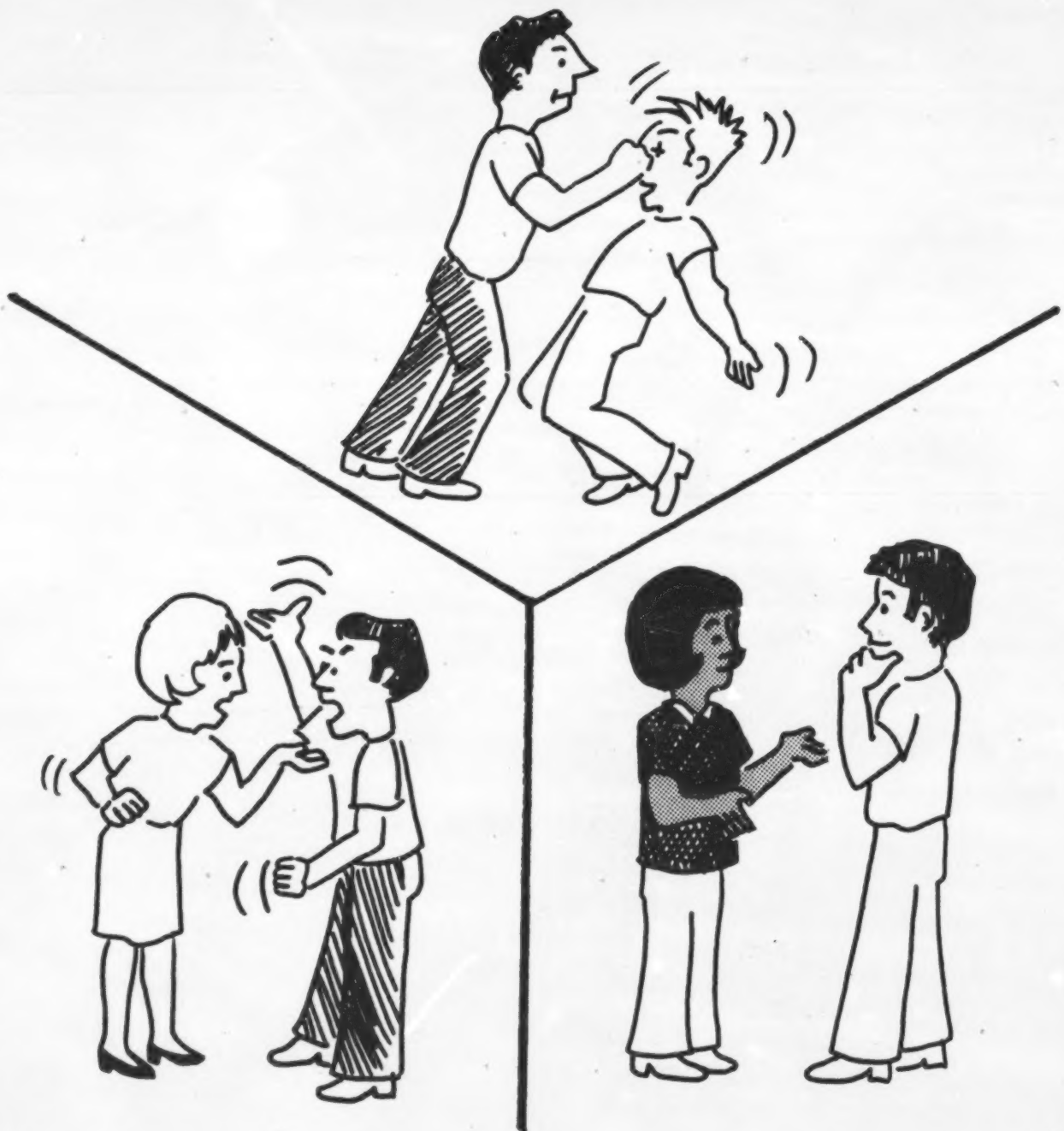


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Transparency #3 Keeping Score



Transparency #4 Showdown



Transparency #5 Adjustments



Win-Lose
(Domination)



Withdrawal



Cold War



Compromise

Student Worksheet #9 Preventing Conflict

Incident:

Conflict:

How could this conflict have been prevented?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Resources for Teachers

BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND ACTIVITIES

Baltus, Rita K., *Personal Psychology for Life and Work*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1976.

Soft-bound text designed to enrich the perspective of vocational and technical students through sociology and psychology. Units cover: The Changing World, Motivation: Needs and Wants; Senses and Perception; Values, Attitudes and Habits; Self-Identity and Personality; Maturity; Health and Physical Fitness; Emotions; Thinking and Problem Solving; Adjustment and Defensive Behavior; Mental Health; Family Relationship; Social Experiences; Civic Participation and Group Involvement; Success and Failure. Includes individual and group learning activities for each chapter.

Hruska, Jack, and Popper, Walter, *The Human Side of Work*, Center for Occupational Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass., 1975.

A curriculum guide for cooperative/distributive education. Includes an Introduction and three instructional booklets entitled *Self, Jobs, and Issues*. Each booklet contains four instructional units, each consisting of about ten classroom activities. The learning activities each include an introduction, a learning experience, a student handout (in most cases) and suggestions for follow-up lessons. Instructional units related to conflict are entitled "Getting Along," "Women and Men: Roles," and "Racism."

Phillips, Paul L., and Cordell, Franklin D., *Am I OK?*, Argus Communications, Niles, Illinois, 1975.

Uses principles of Transactional Analysis to explore personal growth, the needs of others, and interpersonal relationships, explains how destructive "games" can cause people to be in conflict. Aims to help readers to understand their roles in games and how to develop more positive ways of relating to others. Contains exercises for self-evaluation.

Powell, John, *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?*, Argus Communications, Niles, Illinois, 1969.

Explains that personal growth is only possible through a sharing relationship with another person, and can be achieved through honest communication between persons. Deals with defense mechanisms and destructive "games" which result in conflict between persons.

Stevenson, George and Milt, Harry, *Tensions--and how to master them*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 305.

Explains the causes of tension, and outlines ways of handling tensions. Explains how talking about problems, escaping temporarily, taking things one at a time and handling anger can help relieve tension.

Who's Prejudiced? or Why People Act as They Do, a Scriptographic Booklet, Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., Greenfield, Mass., 1977.

One of a series of six illustrated booklets for use in values education. Emphasizes the causes of prejudice, and how people can learn to get along better as a result of examining their own prejudices.

AUDIO VISUAL RESOURCES

The Behavior Game, available from Audio Visual Service, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801. Request film number 03528. (9 minutes)

A delightful satire with a very light touch, revealing the probable effects of discourtesy and of courtesy--their contagious nature and the human needs that make courtesy the best choice. A business and vocational training film which treats meaningful problems in such an understanding and humorous way as to be of universal appeal. A 1971 release.

Dealing with Criticism, available from the Audio Visual Service, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801. Request film number 04317. (11 minutes)

Reveals different ways in which people react to and utilize feedback of a personal nature when it is presented by others. Setting is a film production unit of a large corporation. When the director asks for assistance in correcting a filming problem, the writer becomes openly angry and blames everyone else; the artist covers his anger with a facade of cooperation and willingness to do anything to please the director; the editor realizes that part of the problem may be in the editing and is willing to reexamine his work.

Equal Rights for Women (A Special Film Report for Industry), available from the Audio Visual Service, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801. Request film number 83120. (20 minutes)

Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in private employment based on sex, and this act has revolutionized the working woman's rights. This film presents several dramatized case studies in which women have lodged complaints against companies for sex discrimination. Men are given more pay than women for the same work; seniority lists are based solely on sex, and promotions are given to men; only men are allowed to work overtime; women with young children are refused jobs. Points up the fact that unless a company takes a progressive stand regarding women employees, it can become the victim of expensive lawsuits. A 1973 production.

The Peter Principle, with Dr. Laurence J. Peter, available from the Audio Visual Service, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801. Request film number 83196. (26 minutes)

An interview with Dr. Laurence J. Peter examines his theory about the "system" which produces perpetual lack of job satisfaction, its implications for the individual and for society. Discusses alternatives for managers and for employees. Poses the question, "Will you allow yourself to be conditioned to keep on seeking the next reward, or will you be rational and recognize what really satisfies you?" A 1973 production.

The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong, available from the Audio Visual Service, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801. Request film number 83177. (30 minutes)

Interviews and dramatizations illustrate the theories which made Dr. Laurence J. Peter's book a best seller. Dr. Peter himself appears in the film, explaining and commenting on the dramatizations, proving again Shaw's assertion, "The truth is the funniest joke in the world." A 1975 production.

Trouble at Work, Guidance Associates, 757 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

A set of four filmstrips with long-playing records or cassettes and discussion guide. Realistic dramatizations explore conflict between the impatient apprentice and stern master mechanic; the family-burdened hospital worker and the supervisor faced with absenteeism; the mistake-prone salesperson and the gruff, non-supportive boss; an ambitious filling-station worker and his unmotivated pal.

Your Job: Fitting In, Coronet Instructional Media, Chicago, IL. (16 minutes)

The film gives two case study examples of two individuals failing to 'fit in' in a position in a drafting firm; each due to different reasons. One individual is inattentive and lazy; the other asks too many questions, does things his own way instead of the way he is told, and is constantly telling everyone how they could improve performance on the job. The viewer is then challenged to see if he/she would do anything differently from the first two, in the same position.